

TUNING INTO THE PANDEMIC

A Conference on the State of Music
Research in Aotearoa

November 26th and 27th, 2020

Massey University and Victoria University of
Wellington

Schedule and Abstracts



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

Thursday, November 26th

Block 12, Te Ara Hihiko, Massey University Wellington Campus

9:30am-10am: Registration

Block 12 Level C Mezzanine

10am: Mihi Whakatau and opening remarks.

10:15am Session 1: The Pit (12B09)

Elliot Vaughan and Sacha Copland

Metamorphosis Trail: An exploration of co-creation; a transition from the digital to the tactile; an exercise in community building.

11:15am: Morning tea

Block 12 Level C Mezzanine

11:30am Session 2: The Pit (12B09)

Matthew Bannister

"I'm a little black boy and I don't know my place": Phil Lynott and the Black Atlantic

Nabeel Zuberi

Jumpin' at the Record Shop

Megan Rogerson-Berry

LGBTQ Anthems, Neo-LGBTQ Anthems, and Queer Taste; Categorizing Queer Songs

1:00pm Lunch

Block 12 Level C Mezzanine

1:45pm Session 3: The Pit (12B09)

Anna Edgington

Gender disparity in music production in NZ: interventional strategies for change

Geoff Stahl

'So This is Where the Future Lies': Anne Clark's Changing Places and Urban Dystopias at Night.

2:45pm Afternoon tea

Block 12 Level C Mezzanine

3:00pm 1D08, Block 1: Student Showcase

Jamie Caughley

Sonic Architecture

Robbie Pattinson

FerroChord

Samantha Stonnell

Sonic Blueprints

Ella Glannaz

Elleio: The Diary of a Fruit Loop EP, English & French

3:40pm Block 1, Level 1: Installations

1D15 Bridget Johnson & Jim Murphy

prepared.spaces

1D04 Jesse Austin-Stewart

four swinging speakers

ADR Blake Johnston

Rise

3LA Jon He

00010000pteroptyx: a mechatronic sound installation formalized by
entrainment

3LB/Cluster 3 Entrance

Paul Dunham

Click::RAND. A minimalist sound sculpture.

Click::TWEET. An audio-visual sound sculpture.

Evening Activity:

Laundry (240 Cuba St) will play host to a DJ night on Thursday, November 26th from 6pm, featuring our own TV Disko and DJ Nabeel. No RSVP is needed, friends and whānau welcome!

Friday, November 27th

Room 203, 83 Fairlie Terrace, Victoria University of Wellington, Kelburn Campus, Wellington.

10am: Mihi whakatau

Room 203, 83 Fairlie Terrace

10:10am Session 1: Room 203

Oli Wilson and Catherine Hoad

Preliminary results from Amplify Aotearoa: New Zealand Music Community Diversity Survey.

11:00am: Morning tea

81 Fairlie Terrace

11:15am Session 2: Room 203

Dave Carter

A swung dembow and a triangle wave?

Kimberly Cannady and Xiaotong Yang

When the Borders Closed, the Archive Opened: A Viking Records Summer

Kunyu Yan

Musicking in Early Childhood Education: A Comparison between New Zealand Early Childhood Centres and Chinese kindergartens.

12:45pm Lunch

77 Fairlie Terrace

1:30pm Session 3: Room 203

Hyunah Cho

Wifi model: A cultural context in musical healing

Ewan Clarke

The rationale and techniques behind my first algorithmically-assisted compositions for film

Sam Carswell

Synapse: A Framework for Community-Specific Design of Electronic Musical Instruments

3:00pm Afternoon tea

81 Fairlie Terrace

3:15 Placeholder: Music Industry Roundtable (TBA)

Evening Activity:

A dinner will be held at [El Culo del Mundo](#) (2-4 Roxburgh St Mount Victoria) on the evening of Friday, November 27th at 7pm, at a cost of \$20pp. Please RSVP via the registration link. Friends and whānau are more than welcome to join for the conference dinner; please simply select the amount of tickets you will need.

Abstracts

Jesse Austin-Stewart (Massey University)

four swinging speakers

four swinging speakers is an audio installation work for four hung loudspeakers. The work breaks down the idea of a 'sweet spot' listening position and encourages listeners to engage with the work by moving throughout the space and swinging the speakers themselves. The technology utilised is intended to be widely and financially accessible, using \$20 mobile phones for audio playback and generic bluetooth speakers.

This installation attempts to address two major barriers of accessibility within spatial audio; that spatial audio often requires a lot of economic capital to engage with and that existing spatial audio systems cater for a limited range of listeners as they rely on the use of a sweet spot. Through addressing those barriers, this work creates a spatial audio system that is cheaper to build and also a system where listeners can have an equally intended listening experience.

Matthew Bannister (Wintec)

"I'm a little black boy and I don't know my place": Phil Lynott and the Black Atlantic

This project uses Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* to examine the music and career of Phil Lynott, of 70s Irish hard rock band Thin Lizzy. Lynott's "mixed" ethnic and national lineage (half Caribbean black, half Irish white, born in the UK, raised in Ireland) relate directly to Gilroy's black diaspora both in terms of parentage and popular music, the latter being central to Gilroy's argument about the articulation of black experience of trauma and dislocation in creative and other forms. Discussion of gender in popular music, particularly the association of rock music with masculinity, intersects with discourses about ethnicity that highlight "excessive" masculinity in non-white subjects. The essay considers alternative approaches to masculinity that focus on intra-ethnic conflict, gender performativity, homosocial interaction and punk, while also employing Black Atlantic concepts of antiphony and rhythmic complexity to investigate the band's music.

Kimberly Cannady and Xiaotong Yang (Victoria University of Wellington)

When the Borders Closed, the Archive Opened: A Viking Records Summer

When Aotearoa's borders effectively closed to both incoming and outgoing travel in early 2020, many researchers found themselves either locked in or out of the country. For international scholars with Aotearoa-based research projects, this has meant postponed research plans and indefinite uncertainty about when such research can resume. For domestic scholars, international research plans are similarly on hold. In this presentation, we explore how this situation has created new opportunities and space for local research by local scholars, and we consider both the positive and negative dimensions of this dynamic. As a case study in this context, we will briefly introduce a newly launched research project with the National Library in which we are working on detailed and ethnographic analyses of the Viking Records catalogue held in the Library's archives. Our goal with this project is to launch a large-scale research project on connections between the burgeoning local music industry of the 1950s and 1960s and issues of tourism, technology, distribution, cultural representation, and the sounds and voices held on the recordings themselves.

Dave Carter (Massey University)

A swung dembow and a triangle wave?

This paper presents initial work on how siren jams have shifted from cultural practice to a codified sound. The paper will discuss a general background to siren jam culture and the codification of a sound through tracks uploaded to youtube and soundcloud, prefiguring Jawsh 685's Laxed (Siren Beat). This paper will then consider how to take this research further and some of the ethical issues this raises. In particular, the paper will discuss the potential for this research to be used to contest IP ownership and whether the research should be done by an outsider.

Sam Carswell (Victoria University of Wellington)

Synapse: A Framework for Community-Specific Design of Electronic Musical Instruments

The design of any instrument is inherently subjective. In no place is this more evident than in electronic instruments. Moog's Cyril Lance has described the act of building electronic circuits as an "organization of the universe." But who are we organizing for? What history and understanding of sound is foregrounded in the design of an instrument and to what

effect?

This talk proposes a framework for the development of electronic musical instruments at a community-specific level. While there is a history of electronic instrument designers consulting with communities, little has been done to provide clarity or models around ways of conducting this process. My hope is that, in describing my own process, others who might be inspired to do the same within their communities can benefit from the framework I've used and the lessons I've learned. Here, I've documented some of the background that has led to my experiments with this approach (within the context of an Auckland-based free improvisation community), as well as my current progress through the framework and various issues I've encountered along the way.

Hyunah Cho (University of Otago)

Wifi model: A cultural context in musical healing

By exploring the participants' experiences of Anthroposophical Music Therapy (AnMT) in South Korean anthroposophical communities, the study examines how cultural context influences the participants' musical healing experience. Through applied ethnographic research, the study reveals how the shared cultural understanding of music, music in the human being, and music in healing provided cultural chinmilgam (intimacy) to participants. This shared cultural understanding in Korean anthroposophical communities was the "situated practise" (Kenny, 1982) of participants by providing a familiar and supportive context when they experienced healing via AnMT. This result is consistent and significant enough to be the basis of a new culturally sensitive healing model, which I have named the 'wifi model', which emphasises the significance of the 'cultural musical context' in music therapy practices. Accordingly, this model suggests a new framework for interpreting how musical culture operates in cultural contexts of musical healing practices. The study, therefore, acknowledges the cultural sensitivity in music therapy practices in this global multicultural society. Furthermore, as interdisciplinary research located at the intersection of music therapy, medical anthropology, and medical ethnomusicology, this research offers a new way of exploring music therapy.

Ewan Clarke (Victoria University of Wellington)

The rationale and techniques behind my first algorithmically-assisted compositions for film

Algorithmic composition has become increasingly common in recent decades. Music-generating algorithms programmed by the composer (or partly so) can quickly do the "heavy work" of the compositional process, such as audibly realizing intricate musical textures and smooth transitions that would take hours to compose by non-algorithmic

means. This allows the composer to craft music at the level of structures, systems, processes, and gestures, without getting bogged down in the minute details. If the composer is unsatisfied with an algorithmically generated passage, he or she can simply discard it or improve it by adjusting variables in the algorithm, leading to the very fast iteration of ideas and high-quality results. This approach to composition is well-established in contemporary art music, but is it also useful for screen composers? Might algorithmic techniques expedite the highly iterative, collaborative, and fast-paced process of contemporary scoring? Could algorithmic processes be suitably balanced with a composer's intuitive and expressive judgments to create music that enhances a narrative emotionally? Are the musical styles found in screen music suited to algorithmic composition? These questions will be explored with examples from film scores written by the presenter using algorithmic techniques powered by Max/MSP, a Mac Pro, and an iPhone.

Paul Dunham (Victoria University of Wellington)

Click::RAND. A minimalist sound sculpture.

Click::RAND is an object-based sound installation that has been conceptualised as a sonic articulation of The RAND Corporation's book *A Million Random Digits with 100,000 Normal Deviates*. The work connects this mid-20th century book of random numbers with the electromechanical relay¹ as historically related media artefacts. The work foregrounds the sonic byproducts of a series of relays actuated by the data sets in the book to create a sound installation as a series of compositions that explore the random number sets as a series of rhythmic binary sequences.

Through the performative presence of the relay, the work creates a relationship between early electro-mechanical computers which used relays as a constructive part of their mechanism and random number sets generated by other means. Click::RAND is a standalone installation. It is proposed that the work will be installed in at least two spaces (space permitting) to allow different compositional forms to be exhibited. The minimum proposal is to install one 'sound block' at each location for the duration of the event. The only requirement is a mains power outlet in near proximity.

Click::TWEET. An audio-visual sound sculpture.

Human communication from the written word to contemporary social media has been transformed over the ages by a series of expansions of time and space. Click::TWEET¹ represents two distinct temporalities of media; how they record and represent their own existence at their own speed, in their own code. Utilising social media and obsolete objects, Click::TWEET has been informed by characteristic similarities between Twitter, the telegraph and Morse code. Their different material and lexical features have been utilised in creating a sound installation that re-presents the interwoven temporalities between these media technologies. Click::TWEET uses telegraph keys to replay a series of Twitter messages as Morse encoded telegraphic messages, whereby creating a presence of past

media alongside contemporary media technologies. By enabling the ability to hear the present through the past, Click::TWEET reconfigures the existence of the telegraph within a broader history of social media. Click::TWEET is a stand-alone audio-visual installation requiring a space of approximately 4m², a small table, Internet connectivity (Wi-Fi or wired) and power. Ideally, a plain wall will be behind the work to display the accompanying video.

Anna Edgington (Massey University)

Gender disparity in music production in NZ: interventional strategies for change

Despite the proliferation of accessible and affordable music production technologies, visible and celebrated producer roles continue to be held by men and technical music production continues to be assumed a masculine pursuit in New Zealand and overseas. This study, therefore, seeks to identify the main barriers for women in music production in New Zealand, in an attempt to present effective solutions that will encourage more diversity in this area of music-making. Achieving more intersectional gender diversity in New Zealand music production could lead to the creation of music that is more representative of the Aotearoa's population, of its rich and unique culture and people, to more creative and sonic innovation and to hear more "authentic expressions of women's identities in popular music." (Reddington, 2018)

Jon He (Massey University)

00010000pteroptyx: a mechatronic sound installation formalized by entrainment

Pteroptyx is a genus of firefly commonly found in Southeast Asia, notable for their entrainment phenomena — synchronous flashing behaviour. Instead of the common approach of using entrainment to sync time-related events, 00010000pteroptyx explores the musical possibilities of entrainment in the context of a sound installation. It features an array of 16 rattlers (servo-controlled taogu, commonly known as bolang gu), whereby their mechanical actuations are formalized by a firefly-inspired entrainment algorithm to procedurally generate musical compositions. Sonically and visually, the installation renders dynamic streams of rotating objects, pitched percussion tones, and mechanical noise from sparse and unpredictable actuations to dense and synchronized ones. Aesthetically, this work shifts the focus from outcome, typical in computational art and music relating to synchrony and self-organization, to the process that leads to the synchronous state by providing temporality to the entrainment algorithm via physicalization and sonification.

Bridget Johnson (Massey University) and Jim Murphy (Victoria University of Wellington)

prepared.spaces

prepared.spaces: tech lab is a new sonic artwork that builds upon the tradition of musical instrument preparation, applying such techniques and principles not just to a single instrument but to an entire space. A composer prepares an instrument by affecting a series of micro-interventions, adding individual elements that, taken together, alter and warp the instrument into an entirely new sonic/conceptual artefact. prepared.spaces: tech lab extends these ideas from a single instrument to a space as a whole. Upon entering the prepared space, viewer/listeners encounter a series of mechatronic sonic interventions: solenoids tap rhythmically against metal frames, rotating arms scrape along the concrete floor, and motors bow hanging glass rods. Collectively, these spatio-temporal events provide an immersive experience, positioning audiences in the midst of the mechatronic preparation.

Blake Johnston (Massey University)

Rise

Rise is a physical manifestation of an eternally accelerating rhythm. The Risset rhythm is a paradoxical illusion that exhibits the seemingly impossible behaviour of a rhythmic phrase that constantly accelerates in tempo, yet continues looping forever. The musical and artistic explorations of this phenomenon are rare, and limited to the digital realm. Rise explores this illusion acoustically, and in an austere aesthetic in order to reveal how the illusion is created. Rise features an array of solenoid units that rotate large brass cylinders onto a wooden surface. These are precisely controlled to create complex rhythms that appear to speed up over time.

Megan Rogerson-Berry (Wintec)

LGBTQ Anthems, Neo-LGBTQ Anthems, and Queer Taste; Categorizing Queer Songs

The mainstreaming of LGBTQ+ culture and the increase of LGBTQ+ rights is directly connected to the reshaping of LGBTQ+ music. Queer music scholars have begun to comment on these changes in emerging literature, (see Fast & Jennex, 2019) however, for the most part, the implications of the social and political changes (particularly during and post-marriage-equality) for LGBTQ+ communities on popular music remains largely unexplored.

The data from an online survey, conducted as part of my PhD research in late 2019, that

aimed to canvass broad ideas around queerness in popular music suggested different categories of songs that participants identified as 'sounding queer'. On the one hand, there were songs that were 'expected', often older and culturally significant to LGBTQ rights movements and pride events – what I'd term LGBTQ Anthems. There were also what could be termed Neo-LGBTQ Anthems; songs that signal a new age of LGBTQ acceptance in mainstream popular culture and increased rights and visibility of LGBTQ communities. The remainder of the songs proved to contain a wide range of diverse songs, which made it difficult to categorise, and so the question arose as to why participants might identify these songs as queer. This paper aims to organise the results of this survey into the two categories mentioned, and explore the concept of queer taste, linked to queer aesthetic, in the categorisation of other songs, in order to argue that taste plays a pivotal role in both the creation, consumption and appropriation of queer music in the last 10-20 years, compared to LGBTQ music of earlier decades.

Geoff Stahl (Victoria University of Wellington)

'So This is Where the Future Lies': Anne Clark's *Changing Places* and Urban Dystopias at Night.

Anne Clark's 1983 album, *Changing Places*, vacillates between a stark, scathing critique of urban alienation and tales of solace and escape sought through often uneasy scenes of love and intimacy. Released when Thatcher's neo-liberal policies and post-social fantasies were hardening into a harsh material, lived reality for so many, its post-punk politics resonate courtesy a social realist poetry set to music alternating between the icy synthetic beats of David Harrow, and the languid post-rock guitar sounds of Vini Reilly. It is an album on which many of the songs are set at night, where social differences around gender and sexuality are played out against a dark city. In this paper, I want to suggest that Clark's album articulates a structure of feeling that echoes sentiments found in much of the post-punk, independent music of the time and manifest here as an anxious and/or conciliatory motif that uses the city at night as an ambivalent foil.

Elliot Vaughan (Victoria University of Wellington) and Sacha Copland (Java Dance Theatre)

Metamorphosis Trail: An exploration of co-creation; a transition from the digital to the tactile; an exercise in community building.

A 45-minute presentation by Sacha Copland, choreographer and Artistic Director of Java Dance, and Elliot Vaughan, composer and viola player, with performances from the Metamorphosis Trail participants.

Over the lockdown period, musicians and dancers around Aotearoa participated in a series of one-on-one improvisations over Zoom. Artists from diverse artistic backgrounds

made new connections that might not have otherwise come about, even as the physical, social and emotional distancing of Level 4 was felt keenly by performing professionals. There were 101 duets.

When restrictions lifted and in-person gatherings were permitted, 26 participating artists based in Wellington got together in person for 8 Fridays. After some 'speed-dating' and ensemble improvisation, participants were put into small groups to continue the exploration. This was a rare moment to explore unfettered by the lingering pressure of needing a finished show at the end. That said, there was a public presentation, each group demonstrating aspects of their experiments—a kaleidoscope of relationships and processes.

While Sacha will speak to the organisational efforts, ideas, surprises, and possible futures for the project, Elliot will speak as a participant who found elements of collaboration and community he struggled to break into under ordinary circumstances.

This presentation will examine the Metamorphosis Trail as a uniquely 2020 project, illustrating with performances from the speakers and other project participants.

Oli Wilson (Massey University) and Catherine Hoad (Massey University)

Preliminary results from Amplify Aotearoa: New Zealand Music Community Diversity Survey.

This paper presents preliminary findings from the Amplify Aotearoa: New Zealand Music Community Diversity Survey. This research project has been in collaboration with the New Zealand branch of the Australasian Performing Rights Association (APRA AMCOS NZ). The project seeks to gauge the current state of diversity amongst Aotearoa's music makers, and to understand diverse experiences of working in the industry. With this understanding, we can identify areas where people are succeeding or struggling, and provide industry and communities with robust and accurate information about the breadth of identities and lived realities of music makers in Aotearoa / New Zealand. For this research, we developed an online survey which was targeted specifically at APRA AMCOS NZ members over the age of 16, which was disseminated publicly through social media and targeted music industry channels in October 2019. The results are being released in the first week of December 2020, and focus on gender, as our findings pertaining to gender were the most pronounced and revealed consistent disparities.

Kunyu Yan (University of Otago)

Musicking in Early Childhood Education: A Comparison between New Zealand Early Childhood Centres and Chinese kindergartens.

In my position as a Chinese researcher of early childhood music education, I would like to learn how music occurs in New Zealand early childhood centres. With such knowledge I could inform Chinese teachers in order to offer them new insights and expand their horizons due to the fact that there is no music specialist to teach music at this level of education in both New Zealand and China. Correspondingly, New Zealand educators and teachers might also learn some ideas from Chinese early childhood music education. Therefore, in order to make a comparison, the research was undertaken in both Dunedin centres and Qingdao kindergartens, by addressing the research question: How does musicking occur throughout the day in kindergartens?

Two data collection methods were utilised: participant and non-participant observation of all activities; and semi-structured interviews with teachers and principals. By coding and theming the collected data, it is useful to classify music into three categories. In Qingdao kindergartens, musicking included (i) organised music sessions; (ii) socially functional musicking; and (iii) background music. While musicking in Dunedin centres divided into (i) structured group sessions; (ii) spontaneous musicking; and (iii) background music. Although the categories seem similar, the overall occurrence of music is quite different between Dunedin and Qingdao early childhood centres. For example, in Qingdao kindergartens, organised music sessions occupied most of the children's musical activities and little spontaneous musicking was found, but opposite results were revealed in Dunedin centres. Also, for the purpose of using music, teachers presented different views. Chinese teachers think the main purpose is for children's musical learning, but NZ teachers think the most important objective is for children is to love music.

Nabeel Zuberi (University of Auckland)

Jumpin' at the Record Shop

In the first season of the Amazon Prime series *The Marvelous Mrs Maisel* (2017), when Miriam 'Midge' Maisel enters the Music Inn in late 1950s Greenwich Village for the first time with manager Susie Meyerson, she asks 'What is this place?' Meyerson replies, 'Part store, part museum, part archive.' This paper picks up on the resonances of this answer in taking stock of the record store as a place and space in popular music cultures. My archive of record store discourse includes the relatively little academic scholarship on the institution, music histories, films, television, video, fiction and non-fiction, trade journalism and social media. With its near disappearance, a situation even more precarious during the pandemic, the record store's association with the past supports its viability in post-digital cultures. I call for an open-ended definition of the record store that considers the importance of independent shops, but doesn't neglect the cultural role of unfashionable corporate retailers. I discuss the record store as a gendered and often inhospitable place. I argue that the organisation and mediality of music in the bricks-and-mortar store continue to inform the consumption and experiences of digital music today.

